

## Koyotes to begin playoffs

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For the first time in franchise history, the Kansas Koyotes will face an uphill battle to get to the American Professional Football League championship game.

But that doesn't mean Jim Green's team isn't looking forward to the challenge as they begin their postseason quest with Friday's play-in game to the APFL playoffs against the Junction City Force at 7:35 p.m. in Landon Arena.

"This year has been more challenging than any year," Green said. "It's been an interesting year, but the guys are coming together. They still have a bunch of things to look forward to, and one of them is that they're getting competition like they've never had before. It really tests the chemistry of this team and for the future as well."

For Green, this postseason will take on a whole new meaning as he has announced he will retire from coaching at the end of the season.

Green has led the Koyotes to three championships during his five years as coach.

"I just announced it to the team the other day," said Green, who balances his time between the Koyotes and his job as wellness program manager for Topeka. "I've done a lot here. It's been a great ride, but it's time to pursue other things. The guys all understand. I'll still be around, but just in another position."

Junction City, which plays in the Central Plains Football League as well as they APFL, is 0-4 in APFL games. The Koyotes handed the Force a 62-26 loss on June 19 at Landon Arena.

But Green said the Koyotes aren't looking past the Force.

"They've had a chance to play us and look at our game film and analyze it, and that makes them a dangerous team," he said. "If we're not careful, they can beat us — any team can."

"This is kind of like the Big Dance; we're like a Cinderella team. We're looking to move up and so is Junction City."

The Koyotes (4-5) ended a rocky regular season with a 52-36 loss at Iowa. Kansas built a 16-7 lead but was outscored 38-20 in the second half.

"We moved the ball very well in Iowa," Green said. "I think we just beat ourselves with some communication miscues. We were ahead at halftime and were pushing Iowa. The big thing this weekend is that we need to finish what we start and keep our heads up no matter what."

The winner of Friday's game will take on top-seeded and defending champion Iowa on July 10 in Council Bluffs for a berth in the championship game. The other participant in the title game will be the winner of next week's game between the Mid-Missouri Outlaws and the Springfield Wolfpack.